

**Historic Preservation Public Forum
Senior Center, Main Room
June 7, 2018 (6:00pm – 7:30pm)
Meeting Summary**

Event Facilitator: Nat Strosberg, Department of Planning and Community Development

**Presenters: Charles Berry (Arlington Historical Society)
Steve Makowka (Historic Districts Commission)
JoAnn Robinson / Dianne Schaefer (Historical Commission)
Ann LeRoy / Peter Howard (Master Plan Implementation Committee)**

A general description of historic preservation in Arlington was provided. The description included the following points:

- Arlington has an active base of people engaged in and advocating for historic preservation.
- There are many local historic informational guides.
- The Civic Block Master Plan, produced in 1997, is an example of a local preservation planning initiative that aimed to preserve Town-owned historic resources.
- Local historic preservation activities are largely shaped by the Arlington Master Plan.

The following are relevant Master Plan goals that were discussed:

- Maintain, protect, preserve, and promote historic and diverse cultural resources in all neighborhoods.
- Provide attractive, well-maintained spaces for residents to meet, play, and grow.
- Provide space for arts and cultural activities for all ages.

JoAnn Robinson, Chair of the Historical Commission, discussed the Commission's background, purpose, and activities. She noted that the Commission's regulatory authority is derived from the following:

- The Arlington Historical Commission Charter
- The Arlington Town Bylaws, Title VI – Building Regulations, Article 6 – Historically or Architecturally Significant Buildings
- Massachusetts General Law, Section 8D

She noted that additional information can be accessed at www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org.

Steve Makowka, Chair of the Arlington Historic Districts Commission, discussed the Commission's background, purpose, and activities. He noted that the Commission's regulatory authority is derived from the following:

- The Historic Districts Act, Massachusetts General Law Chapter 40C
- The Arlington Town Bylaws, Title VII – Historic Districts

He further noted that:

- There are seven local historic districts.
- The Commission reviews the architectural appropriateness of certain changes.
- The Commission's decision-making is informed by design guidelines.
- Applicants must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Districts Commission before making certain exterior modifications.

He also shared the following map of Historic Districts, as well as other relevant maps.

George Parsons, Trustee of the Arlington Historical Society, discussed the Society's background, purpose, and activities. He noted the following about the society:

- The society is a 501c3 Non Profit corporation.
- The society is not a Town organization.
- The society has about 220 members.
- The society operates the Jason Russell House museum and the adjacent Smith Museum.
- The society is located at the intersection of Jason Street and Massachusetts Avenue.
- The society has an operating budget of about \$60K per year.
- About 2/3 of the operating budget comes from dues and an annual appeal; 1/3 comes from interest on endowments.

He further noted that:

- The society is the current steward of the Jason Russell House and has been since 1923.
- The society maintains a collection of more than 15,000 artifacts related to Arlington history.
- The society hosts monthly history-oriented lectures open to all.
- The society hosts more than 600 visitors per year from all over the world at the Jason Russell House.
- Every third grader in Arlington tours the Jason Russell House as part of their study of American history.
- The lawn of the Jason Russell House is an open space in the center of Arlington.

A description was then provided of the activities of the Historic & Cultural Resources Working Group. The description covered:

- 1) The current local historic inventory update.
- 2) The nascent development of a survey master plan.
- 3) A second, future inventory update.

Questions were fielded regarding the nature of the current inventory update. The following are points that were made:

- The scope of the project has been largely determined by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- 135 properties are being considered for addition to the inventory.
- In general, the properties were chosen because they comprise a largely intact and undocumented stock of local historic resources.
- The Arlington Historical Commission is responsible for reviewing and approving properties on the proposed inventory update list.

It was stated that further information could be obtained through web-based resources:

- www.arlingtonhistoricalcommission.org
- www.arlingtonma.gov
 - Town Governance/All Boards and Committees
 - Master Plan Implementation Committee
 - Historic and Cultural Resources Working Group

The following contact information was also provided: 4

- vrose@town.arlington.ma.us (Historical Commission)
- ahdc@town.arlington.ma.us (Historic Districts Commission)
- arlingtonhistorical.org (Historical Society – Webpage Email Form)
- nstrosberg@town.arlington.ma.us (Nat Strosberg, Department of Planning & Community Development)